

VZCZCXRO2501
PP RUEHPA
DE RUEHUJA #2249/01 3220612
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
P 170612Z NOV 08 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4456
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1504
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PRIORITY 0490
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS PRIORITY 0261
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 002249

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/W, INL/C, INL/AAE, AND INR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/14/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCOR](#) [KCRM](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: FORMER EFCC CHAIR RIBADU BRIEFS THE
AMBASSADOR

REF: A. ABUJA 1331

[1](#)B. SANDERS-DOUGHERTY NOVEMBER 12 EMAIL

Classified By: Ambassador Robin R. Sanders for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. Former EFCC Chair, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, met with the Ambassador on November 10 at the Ambassador's residence. (DCM and PolOff attended.) Ribadu criticized the current state of Nigerian political affairs, blaming President Yar'Adua for most of the country's woes and describing him as the most corrupt person in Nigeria. He extended his criticism to the current EFCC Chair, Farida Waziri, for conducting what he characterized as cosmetic, rather than concrete, anti-corruption efforts, which he believes threaten to undermine the entire organization. He maintained that Waziri is under considerable political pressure to scuttle investigations into the activities of 31 former governors. Ribadu claimed that the delay in the Supreme Court's (SC) ruling on the 2007 presidential elections is due to the SC justices having to come to grips with having accepted bribes from Yar'Adua's camp in early 2007 at a time when his health did not threaten the viability of his presidency. He also expressed concern about the possibility of a military intervention if the Supreme Court does not overturn Yar'Adua's election, a possibility Post considers highly unlikely. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) In a private meeting at the CMR with the Ambassador, DCM and PolOff (notetaker), former Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Chairman Mallam Nuhu Ribadu told the Ambassador that harassment "was nothing new" to him, given his former role as EFCC Chair. He expressed concern, however, about his future in law enforcement. Ribadu claimed the government is trying to make him leave the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), pointing as evidence to his August demotion, possible reassignment to Bayelsa and the fact that he has not been paid in three months. He also noted a backlash as a result of his lawsuit to stop the demotion. Ribadu told the Ambassador that he has exhausted his efforts to stop the demotion and that his lawsuit is most likely his last formal protest. Whatever the outcome of his lawsuit, his resignation is imminent.

[1](#)3. (C) Ribadu then confided that he is considering leaving the country, at least temporarily, and that he had been exploring the possibility of a fellowship with the Global Development Forum. The Ambassador assured Ribadu that the USG remains concerned about threats to his personal safety and encouraged him to remain in contact. He then said that

one month ago shots were fired on his car, downplaying the incident's characterization as an assassination plot, and more of an attempt to harass him. (Note: Ribadu showed the Ambassador, DCM, and PolOff the bullet holes in his vehicle. End Note.)

¶4. (C) Ribadu dismissed Waziri's recent statements in the press claiming that the cases against the 31 former governors were either too weak. He informed the Ambassador that files had either gone missing or were purposefully removed after his departure and the redeployment of his top aides, (former Director for Operations Ibrahim Lamorde and Lead Investigator Ibrahim Magu). Ribadu maintained that the combination of extreme political pressure and poor management is responsible for any weaknesses that may jeopardize the integrity of evidence in court. He claimed that Waziri is under considerable pressure not to prosecute the former governors. He also depicted the EFCC as a "poorly managed and disappointing institution" under Waziri's leadership, and characterized its current anti-corruption efforts as more cosmetic than real. When asked if Ribadu would respond to Waziri's invitation to meet on November 14 (septel), he told the Ambassador that a meeting would serve no purpose other than dragging his name further through the mud.

¶5. (S) In response to the Ambassador's request for his views on the current situation, Ribadu also discussed the current case before the SC on the 2007 elections. After conveying to the Ambassador his complete disdain for President Yara'Adua, at one point saying that he is "praying for his death to come soon," Ribadu said that before the President's recent health

ABUJA 00002249 002 OF 002

crises, there was little chance that the SC would have ruled against Yar'Adua on the merits of the case, and that the SC justices - including Chief Justice Kutigi - had accepted financial inducements prior to the February 2008 Appeals Court decision upholding the election. He believed this now made it difficult for them to decide against Yar'Adua despite his precarious health. (Note: Ribadu said that while he was EFCC Chair, Chief Justice Kutigi was under investigation for his role in several financial scandals, including taking money for the building of the new Appeals Court facility. He singled out SC Judge Dahiru Mustafa as being firmly in the Administration's pocket as far as bribes were concerned, and noted that SC Judge Katsina Alu was upset with both Attorney General Michael Aondoakaa and Mrs. Waziri for the recent detention on corruption charges of the chief of staff of Rivers Governor Rotimi Amaechi, his close friend and ally, and was looking for a way to strike back, including possibly ruling against Yar'Adua. End Note.)

¶6. (S) Ribadu predicted that no matter what the outcome, there will soon be a new President of Nigeria. He claimed that if the elections are not annulled, the northern-dominated military will step in and relieve Yar'Adua of his presidency, mostly due to concerns regarding the President's health as well as discontent with the lack of achievement by his administration. If the elections are annulled, Ribadu believed that military intervention is also possible and that Northerners will not allow Vice President Goodluck Jonathan to take over. He predicted that the choice will either be between former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, who is currently being courted by the PDP, or Muhammadu Buhari, former military leader of Nigeria from 1983-84, who is known for his "War Against Indiscipline" campaign during his short 20-month administration. When asked whether the Independent National Election Commission (INEC) could competently conduct an election within the 90-day period set by the Constitution, Ribadu replied that it should not be a problem with the right leadership and the political will to do so.

¶7. (C) COMMENT: Despite claims from Ribadu's former Director for Operations Ibrahim Lamorde and Lead Investigator Ibrahim Magu that his life is in danger, Ribadu did not seem as

concerned for his personal safety as his future in Nigeria.

¶18. (S) With regard to Ribadu's assertion that a military coup is likely should the Supreme Court uphold Yar'Adua's 2007 election, we note that this directly contradicts what we are hearing from other political and military sources, but is something very much on our radar screen to watch for any signs at any level in that direction. Right now, however, we do not see this as the most likely or probable scenario. END COMMENT.

¶19. (U) This cable is coordinated with Consulate Lagos.
Sanders